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## Madison school district reinstates fired security staff member

By WKOW  
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UPDATE (WKOW) — Marlon Anderson says a representative with Madison Teachers Inc., the union representing Madison Metropolitan School District staff, has told him the district will restore his job as a security guard at Madison West High School.

Anderson tells 27 News he's ready to get back to work and his union representative is negotiating a return to the district.



A statement from Madison Teachers Inc. said Interim Superintendent Jane Belmore decided to rescind the termination and return Anderson to the district's payroll, including benefits, immediately.

The statement went on to say Anderson will be on paid leave while a transition plan is drawn up to return him to work.

"MTI is pleased to see the district rescind the termination of Marlon Anderson, paving the way for him to return to the incredible work he does with Madison's students. We now look forward to working with the district to review and address its zero-tolerance policy," said MTI Executive Director Doug Keillor.

Anderson said Monday he's hoping the incident will be a teachable moment for the community.

"I'm hoping that [the district] would take note of this and not let this happen again, because there's so many great [staff members], that feel unsupported. We need to feel supported when you go to work," he said.

Anderson said he doesn't feel the district's zero tolerance policy for using racial slurs is clear and he says it doesn't make sense to fire someone without looking at context.

Boys & Girls Club CEO Michael Johnson, who hired Anderson temporarily after his firing went public, says he wants to help the district come up with a new policy and review process.

"Anytime an employee is accused of a situation like this, that they don't terminate immediately, placed them on paid administrative leave, get all the facts before you terminate and put somebody's career in jeopardy," Johnson said.

MTI is demanding change, too.

“Students of color need to be empowered to have the difficult and necessary conversations with students and staff regarding issues concerning race,” the union said in a letter to school officials Monday morning.

Last week, school officials said seven people left the district the previous year under the new zero tolerance policy. They said they’ll be looking at the context and having conversations with the school board about possible changes.

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MADISON (WKOW) — Madison School Board President Gloria Reyes today called for the reinstatement of Marlon Anderson, the Madison West High School security staff member who was fired after a student called him the N-word and he told the student not to, repeating the word back.

“I have requested that the Superintendent review the current situation regarding the use of racial slurs in school and rescind the termination,” Reyes said in a statement.

Madison Teachers Inc., the union representing Madison Metropolitan School District staff, also called for Anderson to get his job back.

Anderson, who began work temporarily today at the Boys and Girls Club of Dane County, says he would like to return.

During an appearance today on the Tamron Hall syndicated talk show, Anderson said he wants to go back to his job, noting the support he received from students in the school that led to a walkout Friday in support of Anderson.

“The students went to bat for me in such an amazing way, I feel like I’m obligated to go back,” Anderson told Hall on the show.

After Anderson’s firing, a massive protest was held Friday and calls for change have been ongoing.

Reyes’ full statement:

[REDACTED]

We are at a critical time in this community and in our nation where racial inequality and racism continues to persist and we must continue to fight against the injustices of our past, present and future.

I have requested that the Superintendent review the current situation regarding the use of racial slurs in school and rescind the termination.

As we experienced a series of racial slurs last school year, we had to take a stand – that we would unequivocally protect students from harm. That we would never excuse the deep pain of this hateful, violent language, regardless of intent.

The Madison School District is committed to the practice of anti-racism within our schools to protect our school community. We will continue to uphold our values of anti-racism and holding our teachers, staff and administration to high standards surrounding the use of racial slurs in our schools.

In our commitment to tackle anti-racism we have created universal practices using the non-discrimination policy to protect those who are most impacted by racial slurs. This is an opportunity for the board to review the policies and practices that are currently being used and dive deep into the issues of racism in our schools. It is important that we do not harm those that we are trying to protect.

I want to give my gratitude and give credit to student leaders especially, as well as all those who have come forward to challenge us and push this conversation forward. With your help, we will do better.

It is all of our responsibility to tackle racism in our community and understand that use of racial slurs harms people particularly those terms that are deeply rooted in pain, struggle and denigration. We are confident that the Madison community will work with us to insure that we work towards racial equality and hold tight to our values.

Going forward, we will review our practice and we remain dedicated to protecting our students and staff from harm by implementing practices that are reflective of the humanity involved. We will grapple with complexity and assess it through a lens of deep racial equity.

I am proud to be part of this work. I am proud that we have made commitments to our community to be an anti-racist school district. I am proud to be part of a community that holds us accountable for those commitments, for being compassionate and thoughtful leaders, for being the best allies to children that we can be.

Thank you.

**Tags**

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